

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 DHA-02 CU-02 EB-08 IO-13 OMB-01
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FM USINT BAGHDAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4395
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 0613

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT IZ
SUBJECT: KURDS RETURN NORTH

REF: BAGHDAD 577

1. LARGE NUMBERS OF IRAQI KURDS ARE RETURNING TO KURDISH TRIBAL AREA IN NORTHEASTERN IRAQ FROM TEMPORARY RESETTLEMENT IN SOUTHERN VILLAGES. IT IS NOT CLEAR AT THIS TIME WHETHER ALL RELOCATED KURDS ARE BEING ALLOWED BACK, BUT MOVEMENT SEEMS CONNECTED TO IRAQI POLICY (DESCRIBED IN REFTEL) OF OFFERING ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL INCENTIVE WHILE MAINTAINING READINESS TO USE FORCE AGAINST ARMED DISSIDENTS. MOVEMENT STARTED ABOUT TWO WEEKS AGO AND IS CONTINUING.

2. IN RECENT INTERVIEW WITH AMERICAN JOURNALIST (SEPTTEL TO DEPARTMENT ONLY) SADDAM HUSSEIN HAS STATED THAT GOI BELIEVES IT HAS FOUND APPROPRIATE FORMULA FOR SETTLING KURDISH PROBLEM AND WILL PURSUE ITS POLICY UNLESS
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RENEWED DISSIDENCE FORCES IT TO CONSIDER OTHER METHODS. FORMULA SEEMS TO INCLUDE IN PRACTICE A NUMBER OF THE ELEMENTS IN ACCORD OF MARCH 11, 1970 BETWEEN GOI AND KURDS LED BY MULLA MUSTAFA BARZANI. THE VICE PRESIDENT OF IRAQ, TAHA MUHIEDDIN AL-MA'ROUF, IS A KURD. ALTHOUGH MA'ROUF IS NOT A MEMBER OF THE CENTRAL LEADERSHIP GROUP, HE REPRESENTS THE REGIME ON THE CHIEF-OF-STATE

LEVEL, OFTEN STANDING IN FOR AILING PRESIDENT BAKR. KURDS HOLD TWO CABINET PORTFOLIOS AND THREE OTHER KURDS, INCLUDING A SON OF MULLA MUSTAFA, ARE MINISTERS OF STATE. THE KURDISH AREA HAS AN AUTONOMOUS ADMINISTRATION WHICH, WHILE CLEARLY SUBJECT TO POLICY CONTROL BY THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT, IS STAFFED BY KURDS AND CAN NOW USE KURDISH LANGUAGE FOR COMMUNICATIONS WITHIN THE REGION. OTHER LOCAL OFFICIALS, SUCH AS PROVINCIAL GOVERNORS, ARE KURDS.

3. THE GOI DOES NOT, HOWEVER, PERMIT KURDS TO EXPRESS SEPARATIST SENTIMENTS AND IS PREPARING MILITARY OPERATIONS TO ROUND UP ARMED DISSIDENTS WHO ARE STILL AT LARGE. IN LATTER CONNECTION, IRAQIS CONTINUE TO ALLEGE COVERT SUPPORT FROM SYRIA AND AMERICAN COLLUSION WITH SYRIAN INTELLIGENCE. FOREIGN DIPLOMATS WHO HAVE RECENTLY APPLIED FOR TRAVEL IN KURDISH AREAS HAVE NOT BEEN GRANTED PERMISSION. IT IS CLEAR THAT KURDISH ISSUE, TOUCHING AS IT DOES ON UNITY AND LONG-TEM POLITICAL VIABILITY OF IRAQ, WILL BE MATTER OF EXTREME SENSITIVITY FOR SOME TIME TO COME.

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